

## SPEECH

OF

HON. J. R. GIDDINGS, OF OHIO,

ON THE

BILL ORGANIZING TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS

IN

KANSAS AND NEBRASKA,

IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION, MAY 17, 1854.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The long-pending contest between Liberty and Oppression, under this Government, is rapidly approximating a distinct issue. This consideration renders the days in which we live, the scenes which are transpiring in this Hall, important, indeed, *historic*, in their character. I look upon them with deep interest—with peculiar emotions. I have long watched the progress of the great question of humanity, now so suddenly precipitated upon us; and I tender my thanks to those who have forced us into a discussion of the great and fundamental principles on which our political fabric has been reared.

And now, sir, what is the question before us? In the far West, midway between the two great oceans which bound our Republic, is a vast and fertile Territory. Its eastern border is washed by the American "Nile," and its western terminus is on the lofty peaks amid the perennial snows of the Rocky Mountains. Latitudinally it extends from the parallel of 36° 30' to the British possessions on the north.

Long since, our predecessors consecrated this immense Territory to Freedom. More than a generation has passed away since they proclaimed that from it "*Slavery and involuntary servitude be, and the same is hereby, FOREVER prohibited.*" That dedication was just and right. It was in accordance with God's "higher law." It is right, and just, and proper, *now*, and will remain so while a God of justice shall rule the destiny of nations. It was then binding and obligatory upon all men in all places, is so now, and will remain so in all coming time.

I am not about to argue the propriety or the constitutionality of the other portion of that compromise, which rendered up Missouri to the curse of Slavery. That surrender was *wrong* of itself, *unjust*, opposed to the dictates of our consciences, to God's law, and to the rights of mankind. It remains unjust and criminal, and will continue so eternally. No time can change it; no argument, no sophistry, can modify it. The Northern men

who voted for it were rejected by their constituents, and some of them hanged and burned in effigy. But the transaction was perfected and placed beyond recall. It passed into history, and no Northern man, nor statesman, nor jurist, has, by bill, resolution, or speech, denied its force or attempted its repeal. And when gentlemen charge the North with seeking its repeal, or denying its force, they presume too much upon our forbearance.

To this period we have regarded that extensive region as the home of freemen. For more than one-third of a century it has stood like the "bow of promise" in the political heavens, giving assurance that the waves of oppression should never spread over it. Now, sir, we are asked to repeal this prohibition of Slavery, and permit human servitude to curse its soil.

But, before I go further, I propose to define, so far as I can, the institution which is now sought to be extended into that beautiful region: yet there is in our language no terms by which it can be properly characterized. The best definition I have seen, is that given by a distinguished Southern jurist, Judge Rufin, of North Carolina, who, on a case which came before him, said: "*A slave is one doomed in his own person and posterity, to live without knowledge, to toil that another may receive the fruits of his labor. The end is the profit of the master; the means, the perfect subjection of the slaves.*"

The first process is to rob the slave of his *intellect*; to shut out from his mind the hope of eternal felicity; seal up the scriptures of truth; draw an impenetrable veil between him and the Gospel; keep from him all knowledge of the duties he owes to himself, his wife, his children, his God; commence the operation in his childhood; dwarf his infant mind; prevent it from all expansion, as he increases in years; render his body a machine, as far as possible, without a soul. In short, rob him of his *manhood*. This crime is the most aggravated offence that we are capable of

conceiving. It is perpetrated to a greater or less extent on every slave; daily and hourly, from his birth to his death, he is deprived of knowledge; and when he enters the future state, he does so with a mind rendered sterile, unsuited and unprepared for future life. The crime committed against him reaches into eternity—is carried to the bar of Omnipotence.

The slave must "*toil that another may reap the fruits of his labor.*" He is robbed of his labor, from childhood to his grave. Every year, every month, every week, every day, and every hour, he is robbed of his earnings; though he toil under the lash, the avails of his labor go to enrich his despotic owner. His wife is at all times liable to be sold from him; his children handed over like swine to the slave-dealer; and himself transferred from owner to owner, like the brutes that perish.

"The end," or object, says the judge, "is the profit of the master; the means, the perfect subjection of the slave." The master flogs him at pleasure. Scourges him, and renders him perfectly subject to his own will. To this insult the slave must submit. If, in obedience to the first law of nature, he resist, the master may slay him on the spot. If he run from the master's brutality, the master may shoot him as he would a dog. The case to which I referred is a good illustration of this point. A female slave had done some slight wrong. Her master attempted to flog her. She ran from him, and he shot her. The master was indicted, and the Judge, in obedience to the law of Slavery, but against his own feelings, which revolted at the proposition, decided that it was the duty of the woman to have submitted to her owner's barbarity; and as she ran from him, he had a right to shoot her.

Will Northern members vote to legislate such murders, such barbarous practices, into Nebraska? Let them answer to God and their constituents.

But the end, the object, of Slavery, is the profit of the master. To render that greater, he may work the slave to the farthest point of endurance; or he may sell him, to be sent to our *American Golgotha*, where an early death awaits him.

We all recollect the case of a man, his wife, and child, imprisoned in Covington, Kentucky, some two or three years since, intended for the Southern market. In their lonely dungeon, with no eye upon them but that of God, they contemplated the miseries to which they and their infant were doomed. They preferred death to the slave market. They first murdered the child of their affections, and then, laying violent hands on their own persons, put an end to their earthly existence, and rushed to the presence of their final Judge, and there made an appeal against this institution that we are called on to extend into Nebraska.

Will Northern members vote for such a proposition? Will they bathe their hands in the blood of innocence; participate in "crimes which smell to Heaven," and call for vengeance on this guilty land?

Mr. McNAIR, (interrupting.) In the event that Slavery should never be carried to Nebraska,

what will become of the speech of the gentleman from Ohio?

Mr. GIDDINGS. I answer, that those Northern members who vote for the bill, will, in such event, be stultified on the record. They will have voted to permit these crimes to be committed. They will have incurred the moral guilt and the disgrace of consenting and aiding the commission of these crimes, although the slaveholders should shrink from consummating them, and mankind prove better than gentlemen now think them to be. [Laughter.]

But, I was describing the institution of Slavery, which we are solicited to extend into the Territory in question, and I do not wonder that my friend starts back with affright at the revolting spectacle. Humanity shudders as she contemplates the horrid barbarities of that institution, and Christianity hides her face as she beholds its iniquities; yet, sir, we are asked to repeal the law which prohibits its existence in Nebraska. Will Northern members vote for it? Will my friend from Pennsylvania [Mr. McNair] vote for it?

The illustrations which I have cited are from slave States; cases of public notoriety; reported through the press; never contradicted; and gentlemen will permit me to give one more case, reported through the public press of Mississippi, received as true, and never, to my knowledge, doubted or denied. If, however, any error has occurred in the report, I see gentlemen from that State present, who will correct it.

A planter was afflicted with a loathsome disease. So offensive were his ulcers, that he was deserted by his white friends; and while thus afflicted and forsaken, a girl whom he owned as a slave kindly and patiently waited upon him, dressed his ulcers, cleansed his person, nursed him, and watched over him until he eventually recovered. With gratitude and affection to his benefactress, he took her to Cincinnati, in our State, executed a deed of manumission, had it recorded, returned to Mississippi, and there married her in legal form. They lived together affectionately for many years; reared a family of children; and, as he lay upon his death-bed, by will he divided his property between his wife and children. His friends, I think his brothers, hearing of his death, came forward and demanded the property. The widow and children were indignant at the demand. They, too, were seized, and the validity of that marriage and will was tried before Judge Sharkey, of that State, who decided that the whole matter was a fraud upon the law of Slavery; that the property belonged to the collateral heirs. His widow was sold by the surviving brothers, the children were bid off at public auction, and both mother and children now toil in chains, or sleep in servile graves.

Gentlemen of the free States: Are you prepared to give your voice in favor of permitting such outrages upon humanity in Nebraska? Let those Northern members who sustain this proposition stand forth before the world, and avow their infidelity to freedom. Let them say boldly that they are willing to assume the in-

famy of consenting to the perpetration of such iniquities.

These cases are merely specimens of what continually occurs in slaveholding communities. But they show that Slavery is the legalization of every crime known in the catalogue of offences. Yet no language can convey a correct idea of its atrocity. That is beyond description. It arose in a barbarous age, and has come down to us attended with the crimes of a darker period of the world.

As already observed, it is excluded by the act of 1820 from this Territory. It cannot be carried there without the consent, without the votes of *Northern Representatives*. No argument, no sophistry, no evasion, can avoid this obvious fact. To vote for the repeal of the Missouri compromise, is to vote for the abolition of Freedom, and in favor of permitting these crimes in Nebraska. It will involve those who vote for it in all the guilt attending that institution. It will be in vain for gentlemen to say they leave the people of Nebraska to commit the crime if they choose! If you, gentlemen, stand by, and consent that your fellow man may, if he choose, commit murder, you will be hanged with him. You will deserve the same fate he receives. If you consent that slave markets shall be opened up in that Territory; that men shall there be bought and sold, robbed of their toil, their intellects brutalized, shot down and murdered; if you vote to repeal this Missouri prohibition for the very purpose of enabling others to commit these offences, will you be less guilty before Heaven than those by whose hands these murders and other crimes are committed? Will not the blood of these victims stain your garments?

The gentleman from New Hampshire, [Mr. HIBBARD,] I thought, spoke feelingly of the people for having hanged in effigy the Northern members of Congress who consented to spread the curse of human bondage over Missouri, and also of those who now hang in effigy members of the Senate who labor to spread these God-defying crimes over that Territory. Now, sir, I am willing that the people shall act as their judgments dictate in such matters. Of the propriety of such symbolical executions, they are the proper judges. If a member here does that which the people think compares in moral guilt with legal murder, let them pass sentence, and, if they please, typify the execution by hanging the man in effigy, provided they do not violate the public peace.

The gentleman spoke of the clergy in terms of strong condemnation, for their labors to prevent the consummation of this great iniquity. I shall not stop here to defend those clergymen. The blow was aimed at the doctrine of holding us responsible for our official conduct. It was aimed at religion, at God's "higher law," so often denied in the other end of the Capitol and in this Hall; so often sneered at and ridiculed by gentlemen who vote to legalize crimes revolting to our natures. Had the clergy of New England and other portions of the country omitted to do all in their power to prevent the consummation of this iniquitous bill, they would have shown themselves

unworthy of their profession. We should have regarded them as "*moral cowards*," apostates from that gospel whose Divine Author offered up his life for the promulgation of truth.

We are told here, and in the other end of the Capitol, that the clergy should attend to their flocks; that they should not interfere in politics; that religion and politics are separate matters. The argument is worthy of the occasion. It is perfectly natural that men should endeavor to shield themselves from exposure. But I ask: Is it possible that, in this age, enlightened statesmen can suppose themselves shielded from moral and religious responsibility while acting here? Do they flatter themselves that their actions are hidden from the *Searcher of all hearts*? Do they regard themselves less guilty in the sight of Heaven, when they vote to permit the people of Nebraska to sell men and women, than they would be, were they to go there themselves and deal in human flesh? If they vote to permit men in Nebraska to scourge and brutalize our fellow beings, are not such members as really tyrants at heart as Nero or Nicholas? If they vote to allow men in Nebraska to shoot down and murder their slaves, are such members less guilty than those wretches who expiate less aggravated crimes upon the gallows?

I repeat, that Slavery is now prohibited in Nebraska, and if it be extended into that Territory, it must be by aid of Northern votes, given by men who *intervene* for the purpose of repealing the prohibition of 1820. No subtle logic, no vague pretences, can excuse members from this responsibility. The record of our votes will go down to those who succeed us; our children will read it with pride or with shame.

Yet, sir, we are told that the President has warmly espoused the policy of extending Slavery into Nebraska. The Senate, by a large majority, have passed the bill before us. All the Southern members of his body, aided by Northern serviles, are in favor of it. I said all the Southern members are in favor of it. I was in error. There are a few honorable exceptions—men who, in my humble judgment, possess the foresight and judgment of statesmen. They appear to foresee the evils which the passage of this bill will bring upon the Territory.

But, Mr. Chairman, as if effrontery had no limits, we are gravely told that it is *unconstitutional* thus to *exclude Slavery from this Territory*! I, sir, shall not occupy the time of this House to vindicate Monroe, and Calhoun, and Adams, and Wirt, and Clay, and all the venerable statesmen who approved this measure, from the charge of stupidity and ignorance now brought against them by ephemeral politicians.

Sir, to argue the unconstitutionality of the consecration of this Territory to Freedom, is an imputation upon the intelligence of the founders of our Republic, as well as upon the intelligence of the people. The framers of the Ordinance of 1787 had no scruples on this subject. They recognised the duty of Governments to protect the liberties of the people. The preamble to that Ordinance says:

"And for extending the fundamental principles of

*'civil and religious liberty, which form the basis whereon these Republics, their laws and constitutions, are erected; to fix and establish these principles as the basis of all laws, constitutions, and governments; which forever hereafter shall be formed in the said Territory,' "It is hereby ordained," &c.*

These doctrines are now denied. Slavery is declared by statesmen of this day to constitute the basis on which "all laws, constitutions, and governments, which hereafter shall be formed in Nebraska *ought to rest.*"

But, sir, this is a new discovery. At the last session of Congress, a bill to organize a Government in this Territory was reported from the Committee on Territories. When it came up for discussion, an honorable member from Pennsylvania [JOHN W. HOWE] called on me, as a member of that committee, to state why a special proviso had not been inserted in the bill, excluding Slavery. In reply, I read the eighth section of the act of 1820, and stated that that law excluded Slavery from the Territory in question, and that its re-enactment would give it no greater validity than it then possessed. This, sir, was done openly, publicly, before the House. No one denied my doctrines, none doubted my correctness. All admitted the accuracy of my statement by their silent acquiescence; and the bill passed this body, I think, by a majority of more than two-thirds. But now they have suddenly become zealous to preserve the Constitution, by repealing this law of 1820. What new light has fallen upon them? What new views of constitution al law have they received? Where were those views obtained? Sir, I regard this pretence a sheer deception, an attempt to mislead the people, who will so regard it.

We are also told that the consummation of this outrage *will quiet agitation; and settle the slave question forever.* Gentlemen admit that its introduction has caused a deeper and more intense feeling in the free States than has ever before been manifested; yet, they urge that its consummation will satisfy the popular mind. Now, sir, I cannot, and will not, argue this point with gentlemen who entertain such contempt of the popular intelligence. For twenty years, this House has endeavored to silence agitation among the people, by legislation for slavery.

When they sent us their respectful petitions, we threw them back in their faces, and closed our doors against that constitutional right of the people. We next struck down the freedom of debate; and as the people became more and more aroused to the assertion and agitation of their rights, we adopted gag-rules, arraigned members like felons at the bar of the House, for daring to assert our constitutional obligations. As the people still moved in favor of liberty, we legislated more intensely for Slavery, in order to silence agitation. In 1850, we passed the most corrupt laws which ever disgraced a free Government, to *silence agitation.* I refer to the Fugitive Slave Law, under which so much blood has been shed. Yet, sir, agitation increased; and your Baltimore platforms were adopted, and both of the great political parties pledged themselves solemnly "to resist and deprecate all agitation of the slave

question, here and elsewhere, in Congress and out of it." Yet, the people became more and more engaged for freedom; and now the advocates of oppression tell us, if we will but pass this bill, consummate this greatest indignity upon humanity, upon freedom, upon the Constitution, that has ever been committed, the people will feel themselves sufficiently reprov'd, and, like the fawning spaniel, will crouch at our feet.

Sir, I repel the foul slander. I feel indignant at the proposition. It is a libel upon the people of the free States. *Who are we?* The servants of the people; created by their breath; sent here to do their will; and when they summon us, we surrender our political existence. Yet, sir, we are told that we must play the tyrant, to silence the popular voice. Sir, you may as well attempt to tear the sun from the heavens, or to dam up Niagara's mighty torrent with your fingers. The people will govern us, will silence our agitation, but we shall never control agitation among them, except by doing our duty—by obeying their will.

Mr. Chairman, who does not know that the Southern and servile presses are already proclaiming, that when this bill shall have been passed, Slavery shall next be admitted into Minnesota, Washington, and Oregon? Who does not know that the President and Cabinet are laboring to prepare the public mind for a war upon Spain, with the undisguised purpose of maintaining Slavery in Cuba?—that they are prepared to sacrifice the lives of our citizens by thousands, in order to stay the progress of civilization in that island?—that the whole Administration press of the country sustains these Executive views?—that Southern papers insist that we shall also conquer St. Domingo, and restore Slavery there; then form an alliance with slaveholding Brazil, as the only nation, besides ours, that legalizes the crimes attendant upon the "peculiar institution"?—that we shall then restore the African slave trade, and thus disgrace our Government, and sink it to a piratical power for propagating oppression and crime?

While these plans are put forth through the public press, we are constrained to listen to exhortations to pass this bill, in order to *silence agitation*, again to cheat Northern men with false pretences. Sir, these efforts to defeat the objects, the ulterior designs, of those who founded this Republic, to overthrow our Constitution and trample upon the principles of humanity and justice, is a gross, flagrant, and unqualified attempt at *revolution.* It is treason to humanity, treason to liberty, treason to the Constitution. Yet, all this is doing under the disguise of attempting to *silence agitation*, again to render us dupes of the slave power. We know from official messages that the President is desirous of entering upon such a war with Spain; that he is willing to sacrifice the lives of thousands of our own people, to stay the progress of freedom under a foreign Government. He is prepared to offer up hecatombs of his countrymen, to maintain oppression and crime in other lands.

Nor are his abettors less guilty. I refer to those "*Swiss guards*," who are ever ready to fight for oppression, for anything, if thereby they can

obtain Executive favors. I know of no worse enemies to freedom, none more unfriendly or dangerous to free institutions. They are worse traitors to liberty than were the Tories of the Revolution; and the time is not far distant when they will be so branded by popular sentiment. Pass this bill; commence your war with Spain; sacrifice the commerce of the free States to the cause of Slavery in Cuba; send your army and navy there; let our men be shot down by emancipated slaves, and then tell me I have overestimated the Northern spirit. If the avowed designs of the President be carried forward, we shall not wait long to witness bloodshed in our own country. Indeed, we have seen *that*, under the compromise acts of 1850. But the excitement arising from the question before us has rendered it impossible to execute the Fugitive Slave Law in the northern portions of the free States. At this moment, I do not believe the whole army of the nation could execute that law in Northern Ohio. Sir, it is notorious, that people already bid defiance to your laws and your power. They look upon Congress with suspicion; and woe be to the public men who, in such an hour as this, shall betray this Government into a barbarous and piratical war for maintaining and extending human bondage. The remedy for these things rests with the people of the North. They must commence the work by passing sentence, and by the political execution of the entire *genus* called DOUGHFACES. Then, agitation may cease.

We are also told that this prohibition of Slavery interferes with the right of the people to "govern themselves." In other words, the logic of those who advocate this measure amounts to this: that "self-government" includes the privilege of buying, selling, flogging, and robbing, such men and women as they can subject to their power. They do not include under the term "people," those who have been so unfortunate as to be born of mothers who have been enslaved. If their fathers were the first men in the State of Virginia, if they themselves possess intellects far superior to our own, yet slaveholders and doughfaces deny that they possess any rights. They are not to be called "*people*." They insist that such persons have no right to participate in the privilege of "*self-government*," nor of "*self-protection*." Sir, the very object of this prohibition was to secure to all the people who go to Nebraska the enjoyment of "equal rights;" and on this account, and no other, do gentlemen seek to repeal it. The member who votes for this bill will thereby exhibit his hatred of "popular sovereignty," of "equal laws."

As remarked, the Congress of 1787 adopted an Ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory. There were, at that time, perhaps less than fifty electors resident there, probably about the same number now in Nebraska. Yet these few required protection. Congress was bound to give it, as we are now. They legislated, however, as much for those who were expected to go into the Territory after the adoption of the Ordinance as for those then settled there. So do we. It would not be right for fifty men now in Ne-

braska to legislate for ten thousand who are to go there next year. That would not be giving the ten thousand equal privileges with those now there. We give them a Legislature, with authority to pass certain laws not incompatible with the laws of the United States. We then extend over them the law to prohibit murder. While the friends of this bill are proclaiming here and through all their presses the doctrine of "*non-intervention*," we expressly intervene to prohibit larceny; we intervene to prohibit robbery and all other crimes, unless committed under the law of Slavery. The law of 1820 prohibits the commission of these crimes also. This prohibition we are called on to repeal, under pretence of "*non-intervention*."

Why, sir, this bill commences, continues, and closes, with intervention. It is itself one continued series of interventions. It authorizes the President to appoint a Governor and judges for the Territory, and yet its advocates proclaim "*non-intervention*," the right of "*self-government*," as the grand distinguishing features of the bill. It prohibits the Legislature from passing any laws affecting the rights of property or of persons pertaining to the Indians. It establishes the "*per diem*" of the members at precisely three dollars, but does not permit them to estimate the value of their own services. This, too, is called "*non-intervention*." The bill establishes the salaries of the judges and other officers, but will not permit the people to do it. Yet its advocates proclaim themselves the peculiar friends of "POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY." It goes further, and under the clamor of "*non-intervention*," of *popular sovereignty*, it prohibits the Legislature from taxing the land of non-residents beyond the amount levied on their own. But its next "*intervention*" is to repeal the prohibition of Slavery, in order that a portion of the people may hold in bondage such persons, either black or white, as the Legislature may see fit to enslave.

It has ever been, and is now, the plain and obvious duty of all Governments to intervene to the full extent of all their just powers for the protection of mankind from oppression, injustice, and crime.

The whole eternity of the past has brought to us no instruction more important than this duty of Governments. In the darker periods of man's existence, brute force constituted his only safety. Go to the continent of Europe; visit the ancient castles, erected at a period when moral and political darkness covered the world. Those frowning towers were erected at immense expense, for the purpose of protecting their inmates from violence. They tell us of a period when right was maintained by physical means, by massive walls, by coats of mail, by the sword, and by the lance. These were confided in as the only protection of their owners. Those mighty fortresses are now deserted; dilapidation and ruin mark the crumbling masses. The light of civilization taught mankind that reason, "just and equal laws," are more powerful than granite walls, than coats of mail, or swords, or spears. Protected by just and enlightened laws, each man may sit

under his own vine and fig-tree, and there will be none to molest or make him afraid.

Sir, I repeat, it is this safety, this protection to each and every individual, which constitutes the object, the end, and design, of all Governments. Nor is this duty confined to Governments; it attaches to individuals. Wherever I am, if I see my fellow man, who is weak, beset by the strong, either for the purpose of robbery, revenge, or murder, it becomes my duty to protect him, so far as I can safely do so. The moral duty continues far beyond the reach of municipal law. I am morally bound to protect my fellow man, if in my power, from accident, from wild beasts, from storm and tempest, from cold and hunger, aye, from the machinations of slaveholders and doughfaces, from petty despots, and from those who would play the tyrant over him. But the Senate, by passing the bill before us, has clearly denied that this duty of protection extends to the people of that Territory. A portion of this body, and I think a majority, agree with the Senate. It is also said, on all sides, that the President and Cabinet unite in the opinion that "non-intervention" shall be the policy of this Government. I therefore arrive at the conclusion, that if this bill becomes a law, Congress will not protect the weak and oppressed who shall hereafter reside there. On the contrary, the bill in distinct language repeals the law which now protects them, and leaves a portion of the people who shall go there, to oppress and enslave another portion, if they choose to do so.

Now, sir, if Congress refuses such protection, by adopting the policy of "non-intervention," it will leave to the slaves there the right and the duty to protect *themselves*. It will be the duty of other men, to the extent of their power, to aid them in the laudable work of protecting their lives and liberties.

The thousands of American citizens, of Germans, of French, of English, of Scotch, and Irish, who have come to this country to enjoy a *free* Government and "equal laws," will sympathize with the oppressed; and as they go to Nebraska and Kansas, by thousands and tens of thousands, let them go with arms in their hands. I would from this forum speak to them as one who is in earnest on this subject; one who deeply feels the dishonor which this bill will bring upon our country. I would say to them, Go there, prepared to defend the democratic principle of "equal laws," of "*protection to all*;" go there, recognising the great truth that "*all men are endowed by their Creator with the inalienable right to life, liberty, and happiness*;" go there, determined to make it a free land; determined that you will not associate with *slaves*, nor with slaveholders; that you repudiate every tyrant, every oppressor. Tell the slave who comes there, his rights; teach him his obligations to himself; put arms into his hands; instruct him in their use, and the best mode of protecting himself. Tell him that "*non-intervention*" is the policy of Congress. Were I a resident of that Territory, and slaves were held in bondage around me, I would do by them as I would have them do by me, were I in their con-

dition. I would supply them with arms, and teach them to use all the means which God and nature has placed within their control to maintain their freedom and their manhood.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I feel some desire to expose the statesmanship of this Administration. They have openly adopted the policy of "non-intervention;" they have tied their hands, and when the Americans, and Germans, and French, and English, who emigrate to Nebraska and Kansas, shall put arms into the hands of the slaves, and the colored men shall drive back the slaveholders, killing some and frightening others, we shall have exclamations of horror from Southern members, and from the President, calling for an army to put down the civil war which will then be going on. But, sir, do you not think that one general, united exclamation of "*non-intervention*" will then come from the North? Will they not hold the chalice, which you have prepared, to slaveholding lips? Will they not hold you to your present policy?

Southern gentlemen complain of this prohibition also, for the reason, as they say, that it precludes them from carrying their *property* (meaning slaves) into the Territory. I can half excuse Southern members for thus attempting to degrade the likeness of God to the level of swine. They are bred up to the practice of calling men and women "*property*." It sounds less harshly than *slave*. But we can find no such excuse for Northern members who designate their fellow men by the term *property*.

He who bestowed on us his own image, demands that we shall maintain the dignity of our race. If we reverence God, we must respect his image. Man in his rudest state has ever refused to become the property of his brother. In no age, in no clime, has man peacefully surrendered himself to become the property of his fellow man. No people have yet been found so low in the scale of moral being as to omit defending their lives and their liberties when in their power to do so. To call men property is a libel upon ourselves. The framers of our Constitution rejected such abuse of language. Mr. Madison said it would be *wrong* to admit in the Constitution "*that man could hold property in man*."

We are charitably bound to believe gentlemen acquainted with facts so familiar to us all. It is true, however, that one gentleman attempted to argue the point, and said we could not tell the origin of property in brutes. It was evident his knowledge of Scripture was limited. Had he read his Bible more carefully, he would have learned that, early in the history of our race, "*God gave to man dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all the beasts of the field*." But, Mr. Chairman, he never gave man dominion over his fellow man. He created us in His own image; and God, and man, and nature, must abhor these attempts to degrade that form to the level of the beasts of the field.

But perhaps the views of gentlemen ought not to be commented on with too much severity. For, if reports be true, some of these members have *sold themselves*, at prices, perhaps, below that often paid for Southern negroes. I could tell

of some rare conversions to the support of this measure; some quite as sudden, if not as miraculous, as that of St. Paul. But I prefer to withhold names until the vote shall be given, and the Executive appointment made. These names will then be published. I speak of it at this time, that Northern members who vote for this bill may understand that the eye of the public is upon them. It is time that this slave trade now carried on in the bodies of members of Congress should be prohibited.

Why, sir, for the first time in the history of our Government, the President has come out, through the columns of his organ, the "Union," of this city, and advertised for the purchase of members of Congress. I refer to an article in that paper some weeks since, stating, in substance, that if Northern members, by sustaining this bill, incurred the displeasure of their constituents, the President would sustain them by Executive favors. This was the substance of a long article, in which Executive appointments were unblushingly tendered, through the public press, to buy up Northern doughfaces; to purchase the very men who now designate their fellow men as "property." I do not wonder that they entertain low opinions of mankind, and term their brethren "property." But they should remember that no colored man ever degraded his race by *selling himself*!

Sir, I feel humbled as an American, when I reflect upon this disgraceful practice, now so openly followed, of buying up members by the assurance of Executive favors. Without such resort, no man would expect this bill to succeed. It is *moral bribery*. The guilt is as great, aye, greater, than it would be if both parties were subjected to punishment under municipal laws. Standing, as we do, in high official stations, no State or municipal law can punish these corruptions. We are therefore responsible only to the people and to God. Their eyes, however, are upon us, and their judgment cannot be evaded.

Again, Mr. Chairman, we are told that this prohibition of Slavery marks the slaveholding portion of this Union as lower in their moral sentiments, and inferior to the people of the free States in their sense of justice and their duties to mankind.

Gentlemen of the South must know, the civilized world must know, that we do regard slaveholders far beneath the advocates of Freedom, in their sense of moral obligations. Why, sir, the institution has been discarded from the free States solely on account of its barbarous character. For the same reason, it was repudiated by England, by France, and by nearly all the civilized world. Indeed, the semi-barbarians of Tunis, of Egypt, and other Mahometan Governments have repudiated it. The exercise of power by one man over another, the flogging of women, the selling and buying of men, the rearing of slave children for market, the shooting of slaves, are all revolting to the conscience, corrupting to public morals, and degrading to those who participate in such wickedness.

I would call the attention of gentlemen to cases, officially reported, where the slaveholder

often inherits, and sells as slaves, the children of his brother. Often he inherits and sells as slaves the children of his father. And popular judgment has been in great error if men in this city, almost under the shadow of our Capitol, have not perpetrated still greater outrages on public morals. These crimes are all legalized by the law of Slavery, and no slaveholding community is protected from them.

To surrender this vast Territory to Slavery, will exclude free men from it; for, as I have said, free laborers, bred up with feelings of self-respect, cannot and will not mingle with slaves. For these reasons, it is most obvious that the character of the States to be carved out of this Territory will be determined by that of the Government now to be established. If the Territory be settled by slaveholders, the States will of course be slaveholding States. When admitted as such, they will hold an influence in this Government according to the number of their slaves; and the man who goes there with five slaves will add to the influence of his State in the Federal Government, as much as four of our educated and intelligent freemen of the North. The petty despot who holds in bondage, in ignorance, in brutal stupidity, one hundred of his fellow beings, will wield as much influence as sixty-one of our Northern freemen. Are gentlemen willing thus to bring down their constituents to the level of slaves? Are they elected here by men deserving such moral and political degradation? It is said, however, that if the slaves were free, they would increase the apportionment of Representatives; and the number of members of Congress, from the States holding slaves, would be greater than it now is. That is true; but in such case, the Representatives would exert their influence in favor of Freedom, and not of Slavery. Their objects and ours would be the same—the elevation of man, and the progress of Liberty. But let them represent slaveholding constituencies, and they will; to the extent of their power, legislate for Slavery, and *against* Liberty.

Mr. Chairman, it has become obvious to all, that these conflicting institutions of Freedom and Slavery cannot flourish together under the same Government. They can never be reconciled. They ever have been, they are now, and ever will be, at war with each other. Virtue and crime will not commingle; Heaven and Hell cannot be at peace. This Federal Government must be either separated from the support of Slavery, and set apart to the maintenance of Liberty, leaving the "peculiar institution" entirely with the States in which it exists, or we must give it up to the control of the Slave Power. No proposition can be plainer. Every indication shows this to be the case. The free States have taken position. Will they re-consecrate this beautiful Territory to Freedom? Will they spread liberty, prosperity, contentment, Christianity, over it? Shall the school-house and the church be found there? Shall well-cultivated fields and beautiful dwellings greet the eye of the traveller, as he passes over it? Shall the physical and intellectual powers of our race be developed, and man exalted, throughout that immense country?

Or shall this goodly land be delivered over to oppression? Shall clanking chains, and sighs, and groans, and bitter moanings, be heard through its wide extent? Shall slave markets supply the place of churches and school-houses? Shall waste and dilapidation spread themselves over it? Shall wrong, injustice, and crime, be encouraged and protected there?

These questions are addressed to us. The responsibility of answering them must be met. Are we the men for the occasion? If we act for that which we know to be right, in accordance with our conscience, with Heaven's law, we shall hereafter enjoy the consolation of having done our duty, and the people in that Territory "will hereafter rise up and call us blessed."

But if we repeal this prohibition, and extend Slavery, with its crimes, over that beautiful country, we must expect the condemnation of mankind, and of our own consciences. Our names will go down to posterity associated with oppression, with all the moral guilt attached to an act so unjust and wicked. And as the suffering slave shall in future years bow himself to his unending toil, or shriek under the lash, or see his wife and children sold like brutes, his bitter curses upon our names and memories will mingle with his invocations for deliverance from the torments to which our votes will have consigned him.

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